

In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Volume 2, Issue 6, March 14, 2003

Inside this issue:

Message from the Mayor	1
Employee Profile	2
Cherry Blossoms Coming	2
Emergency Preparedness in the District	3
Police Graduation	3
District Seeks Rightful Owners of \$170 Million in Unclaimed Property	4
District Activities	4
Community News	5
Upcoming Events	5

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
OF THE MAYOR
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Penn. Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20004
Phone: (202) 727-2980
Fax: (202) 727-6561
www.washingtondc.gov

Message from the Mayor

Two schools, one message: our children's education should be a priority for all of us. In the past few weeks, our city has celebrated the opening of two modernized elementary schools: Barnard Elementary School in Northwest and Miner Elementary School in Northeast.

On February 25, I joined the residents of Ward 4 in opening Barnard Elementary School on Decatur Street. The original Barnard Elementary was built in 1926 and was in desperate need of restoration. The new Barnard is a high-tech facility that provides more space and significant safety and modernization improvements that make this school an asset to its community.

The new school, built in collaboration with the DC Public Schools (DCPS); the US Army Corps of Engineers; the architectural firm of Baker & Associates; and the Barnard community, is a student-friendly facility where teachers can teach, children can learn, families are involved, and communities are partners.

On March 3, I cut the ribbon at Miner Elementary School on 15th Street in Northeast. Like Barnard, Miner was one of eight elementary schools selected by the DCPS for modernization as part of an overall plan to bring a new generation of schools to the nation's capital.

Against considerable opposition and in the face of a hostile society, US educator Myrtilla Miner, for whom Miner Elementary is named, bravely founded and operated the Colored Girls School in Washington. The school was supported by the Quakers and by donations from abolitionists. Although the school changed locations and names, it maintained Miner's original intent: to teach teachers who would teach others. Harriet Beecher Stowe gave \$1,000 of her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* royalties to the school.

At Miner Elementary, some of the modernization features include more classrooms that are developmentally appropriate, increased storage space, new community meeting rooms, adequate parking with drop-off and pick-up safety zones and a self-contained play area. The new facility can house up to 480 students from the Head Start program to grade five.

All of our students deserve to be educated in schools that are welcoming, safe, and structurally sound for them to succeed. They deserve nothing less. A few weeks ago at our annual education hearing, I heard several students talk about the conditions of their schools. That's one reason why I'll keep fighting to fix our schools and make sure all our children have all they need to reach their full potential—textbooks, technology, and teachers.



AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

Employee Profile

Bill Reid

Some of the people who call for help in a crisis find a care coordinator who has been helping people all of his adult life. He is William "Bill" Reid at the DC Department of Mental Health.

Bill has responded to calls coming in to Department of Mental Health's 24-hour Access HelpLine since last July. The hotline was launched last year to coordinate immediate assistance for individuals and families facing mental health routine and crisis situations. Care coordinators respond to real-life crises such as an unmanageable child or a family member with severe emotional problems. In such instances, Bill Reid and his team members swing into action, consoling, identifying and dispatching emergency support and assistance.

"Our hearts go out to children caught up in the unfortunate situations of their parents," says Bill. "We do all we can to be there for them, to help them cope and to adjust."

Caring for and about people comes naturally to Bill, who grew up in the District, attended the old McKinley High School, and earned a degree from DC Teachers College, a forerunner of the University of the District of Columbia. He volunteers for All Nations Baptist Church, located at the corner of North Capitol Street and Rhode Island Avenue, NE, where he is a deacon and a member of one of the church choirs. In addition, Bill is a regular volunteer with Rap, Inc., and often shows up there with warm coats and other much-needed clothing for children and women served by that organization's outreach to families involved in the prison system.

In 1978, Bill began his government career as a rehabilitation specialist at Saint Elizabeths Hospital. He is a single parent who raised a daughter, he says, "the old-fashioned way, with a lot of love and attention."

Bill Reid and the Access HelpLine staff respond to more than 800 calls a week. They are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1 (888) 7WE-HELP.



Bill Reid

Cherry Blossoms Are Coming!

Despite our colder than normal winter, I'm excited to report that there's a ray of sunshine on our horizon, and it is pink and flowery. On Saturday, March 22, the 2003 National Cherry Blossom Festival will begin and will run through Monday, April 7.

This year's festival marks 150 years of formal relations between the United States and Japan. In addition, we commemorate the 91st anniversary of the planting of Japanese cherry trees around the Tidal Basin near the Potomac River. More than 40 organizations, including the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian Associates, the Capital Children's Museum, the Downtown Jaycees, and the Japan American Society are coming together to present the events of the two-week festival.

This year, the Cherry Blossom Festival will boast more than 500 participants in 30 cultural performances and demonstrations. Also new this year, the events are celebrated not only among the cherry trees at the Tidal Basin but throughout the city. Tall ships will be docked for the entire two weeks of the festival at the Southwest Waterfront, and there will be tree plantings in all eight wards of the city.

We are taking extra steps to ensure that visitors at this year's festival are safe and feel secure in their surroundings. We're working with several agencies—local and federal—to provide an extra layer of security on our National Mall. Of course, we encourage tourists from near and far to come and enjoy our Tidal Basin and other parts of the city.

The Cherry Blossom Festival's schedule of events includes cherry tree planting ceremonies throughout the District; a kite festival on the National Mall; a 10-mile race; martial arts performances at the Jefferson Memorial and the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center; activities at the Capital Children's Museum; and a Japanese lantern lighting ceremony at the Tidal Basin. For a schedule of all events, please visit www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.

The Cherry Blossom Festival is only one reason we're excited about tourism in the District. This month, our new Washington Convention Center will open. The new center is expected to attract 3 million people annually and pump \$656 million into the District's economy. Early bookings extend through 2007.



Cherry Blossoms



LINK TO OTHER WEBSITES

[DC Agenda](#)

[Hands on DC](#)

[DC Convention and Tourism](#)

[DC Public Library](#)

Emergency Preparedness in the District

What do a box of crayons, a radio, bottled water, and peanut butter have in common? If you're the parent of a young child, you know! These were critical supplies to have on hand during last month's historic snowstorm, which left more than 16 inches on the ground in the District.

These items became as important as a snow shovel because for a few hours last month, our city was virtually shut down by the snowfall.

When we talk about being prepared for an emergency—or a disaster—we are talking about events such as last month's storm. We are talking about planning for three days stuck inside because of snow or, perhaps, three days when you can't stay in your home because of flooding or loss of power.

In the District of Columbia, most of the emergencies we face are caused by natural disasters. Our Emergency Management Director, Peter LaPorte, has spent much of his time over the past several years thinking the unthinkable and then making contingency plans for the city and its neighborhoods.

Keeping our neighborhoods safe is one of my top priorities for the next four years. This means making sure you feel safe in your neighborhood, even in the face of a disaster. As citizens of the nation's capital, we know that we face threats and challenges that others do not. We know that being at Code Orange means tighter security at our work places; it means paying attention to a forgotten package on the Metro; it means planning to be separated from children and loved ones during a national emergency.

As a city, we learned valuable lessons from September 11 on how to work seamlessly with the federal government, our surrounding jurisdictions, and disaster relief organizations, including the Red Cross. We have accomplished much to strengthen coordination and communication with federal, regional, and local governments; the private sector; service providers; and, most importantly, our citizens.

We are providing citizens with the best information available to help them prepare themselves and their families for an emergency. Our broadcasters are prepared to join with the city to make sure residents and visitors have timely, accurate, and reliable information. I am in touch daily with the Bush administration and the Department of Homeland Security, and I am confident that we have put in place all measures needed to meet any challenge that arises.

We are currently holding meetings to address citizens' questions about emergency preparedness. The meetings address citizens' immediate concerns about potential terrorist attacks and provide information on how citizens can volunteer through the District's Citizen Corps. For more information about the meetings, visit the DC government website at www.dc.gov, or call (202) 442-8150.

Police Graduation and Honors

Last month, I was proud to honor the most recent class of 41 experienced law enforcement officers as graduates into the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). Our men and women in uniform play a vital role in improving public safety and rebuilding our neighborhoods.

Diversity is one of our strongest assets as a city. That is why we are committed to increase our Latino representation on the force. Our 26 new MPD officers from Puerto Rico are evidence of that commitment.

All of our Metropolitan Police officers hold a sacred trust in our city to protect our citizens and to help us build community service. Their job will not be easy; but it will always be worthwhile, as many police officers already know.

Consider the case of rookie Officer Kevin Whaley and his partner Officer Eldrick Creamer. On February 20, they demonstrated quick action in the face of a very serious situation. Two groups of men became involved in a dispute near Benning Road and East Capitol Street in Northeast. Two men in a car chased another car occupied by four men, and they began shooting at the fleeing vehicle.

The driver of the pursued car and a backseat passenger were both shot in the neck. Minutes after this shooting, Officer Whaley and Officer Creamer searched the area and located two men in an alley behind 35th Street, NE. When confronted, at least one of the men produced a handgun and fired at the officers.

It was at this time that Officer Whaley returned fire. Both suspects were shot, taken to the hospital, and charged with assault on a police officer. Detectives are investigating whether they were involved in the earlier shooting. Officer Whaley, a rookie, handled himself like a veteran.

My vision for public safety is simple—I want us to help foster a real sense of community. Congratulations, again, to the 41 new graduates who will enter our Metropolitan Police force.



District Seeks Rightful Owners of \$170 Million in Unclaimed Property

The District of Columbia Office of Finance and Treasury (OFT) has roughly \$170 million—in the form of unclaimed property—to give back to its rightful owners, and it is time for people to make their claims. The city serves as custodian for this property until the rightful owner is found—which could be you.

Unclaimed property consists of money and other personal assets that are considered lost or abandoned when an owner cannot be located after a specified time frame, usually three years. Abandoned property includes checking accounts, certificates of deposit, paid-up life insurance policies, unpaid wages, checks, dividends, insurance payments, money orders, refunds, savings accounts, and stocks.

OFT's Unclaimed Property Unit receives unclaimed property from banks, insurance companies, utility companies, hospitals, universities, and other entities.

A complete list of the District's unclaimed property is available on the Internet at www.cfo.dc.gov. Residents can use this website to search the unclaimed property database, submit an online inquiry form, and learn how to reclaim assets.

In the past six months alone, the District government became the custodian of an additional \$15.9 million in unclaimed assets from 18,728 individuals. Of this amount:

- 388 claims are for \$5,000 or more.
- 69 claims are for \$25,000 or more.
- Nine claims are for \$100,000 or more.
- One company is owed more than \$365,000 in the form of a cashier's check.
- One individual is owed \$161,000 from a checking account.
- One individual is owed \$160,000 from a certificate of deposit.
- One married couple is owed \$129,530 each from two certificates of deposit.

The Unclaimed Property Unit returns an average of \$6 million a year to its rightful owners. To increase this rate of return, the unit is conducting an outreach program, including visits to nursing homes, non-profits, and churches to improve public awareness of its efforts. Any organization interested in setting up an information session may call (202) 442-8181.

District Activities



On March 3, Mayor Williams toured the new Washington Convention Center, which opens later this month. Washington Convention Center Authority general manager Lewis Dawley (left) and Allen Lew (right), managing director for development, led the tour.



On February 26, Mayor Williams attended the Kuwaiti Embassy's Independence Day celebration hosted by the Kuwaiti Ambassador Salem Abdullah Jaber Sabah and his wife Rima Sabah. Attorney Lloyd Hand (at far left) joins them.



The Metropolitan Police Department held its Graduation Ceremony for new officers at the National Zoological Park's Visitor Center Auditorium in Northwest.



On February 26, Mayor Williams honored Metropolitan Police Department officers Eldrick Creamer and Kevin Whaley for their quick action in the line of duty in Northeast on February 20.



Community News

- [Mayor Williams Gives Opening Remarks at National League of Cities](#)
- [DMV Price Increases Go Into Effect March 6](#)
- [Family Emergency Preparedness](#)

[Click here](#) to view news releases.

Upcoming Events

03/19	Emergency Preparedness Meeting 6:30—8:30 pm 2000 14th Street, NW, 8th Floor Translation services for non-English speaking communities will be available
03/22 to 04/07	National Cherry Blossom Festival www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org
03/16	St. Patrick's Day Parade 12 pm Begins at 7th Street and Madison Drive, NW, and ends at 7th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
03/23	Washington DC Marathon 7:30 am Begins at Memorial Bridge and ends at Freedom Plaza
03/24 to 03/30	World Figure Skating Championship 7 pm MCI Center 601 F Street, NW www.2003worlds.com
03/29	Great American Cleanup Kick-Off 9 am—2 pm St. Augustine's Church 600 M Street, SW

[Click here](#) to view the Mayor's daily schedule.

